

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-02 ORM-02 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /071 W

----- 110414

R 051440Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7962

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, LE

SUBJECT: MARONITE MONKS

REF EMBTEL 15684 (NOTAL)

1. YESTERDAY, JAN 4, L'ORIENT LE JOUR CARRIES ON
PAGE 6 ARTICLE HEADLINED "FATHER CHARBEL KASSIS FOR A
FEDERATED STATE IN LEBANON" ARTICLE CONTINUES "FATHER
KASSIS, SUPERIOR OF MARONITE MONKS ORDER FAVORS
TRANSFORMATION OF LEBANON INTO FEDERATED STATE."

2. "IN AN INTERVIEW PUBLISHED IN WEEKLY AL-DESTOUR
FATHER KASSIS BELIEVES THAT'LEBANESE CONSTITUTION HAS
EVOLVED TOWARD THE FORMATION OF A FEDERATION BECUASE
THE LEBANESE WISH IT."

3. "'THROUGHOUT ITS HISTORY POLITICAL LIFE IN
LEBANON HAS BEEN PUNCTUATED EITHER BY A MOSLEM VETO
OR A CHRISTIAN VETO, WHICH PROVES THAT THE PEOPLE FAVOR
A FEDERAL STATE. IT IS FOR THIS REASON THAT I REPEAT
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FOR THE THOUSANDTH TIME THAT WE HAVE THE COURAGE TO

PROGRAM A FEDERAL LEBANESE STATE.' FATHER KASSIS APPEARED ON THE POLITICAL SCENE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE LEBANESE CRISIS, WHICH HAS EXISTED FOR NINE MONTHS. HE PARTICIPATED AT THE MEETING AT BAABDA ON DEC 31 WITH MESSRS. CHAMOUN AND GEMAYEL. WITH REGARD TO HIS INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICAL AFFAIRS FATHER KASSIS HAS GIVEN THE FOLLOWING EXPLANATION. 'THE MONKS ARE BASICALLY AND ORGANICALLY RELATED TO THE PEOPLE. IT IS FOR THIS REASON THAT THEY MUST REMAIN CLOSE TO THE PEOPLE AND HELP THE PEOPLE FIND A SOLUTION TO THEIR MISERY.'"

4. "ALL CHRISTIANS HAVE THE RIGHT TO TRAIN WITH WEAPONS TO DEFEND THEMSELVES. THE SAME CAN BE SAID FOR MONKS."

5. " WITH REGARD TO WHETHER THOSE WHO ARE INVOLVED IN MASSACRES CAN BE PARDONED, FATHER KASSIS RESPONDED 'I CONDEMN MASSACRES BUT I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT A MAN CAN UNDERTAKE SUCH AN ACT WITHOUT REACTING TO AN ACTION THAT IS EVEN MORE CRUEL.'"

6." FATHER KASSIS AFFIRMS THAT THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE MARONITE PATRIARCH AND THE MONKS. 'THERE MIGHT, HOWEVER, EXIST A DIFFERENCE WITH REGARD TO ACTIONS TO BE UNDERTAKEN.'"

7. "FURTHERMORE, THE SUPERIOR OF THE MARONITE MONKS DENIED CATEGORICALLY INDICATIONS THAT CONVENTS HAD BEEN TRANSFORMED INTO ARSENALS. 'THERE ARE NO MORE ARMS THAT THERE ARE ARMED ELEMENTS IN THE CONVENTS'"

8. "FATHER KASSIS DEPLORES THE 'WEAKNESS' OF THE LEBANESE STATE. HE CONSIDERS THAT THIS WEAKNESS IS NOT THE ONLY REASON FOR THE CRISIS. 'THIS WEAKNESS HAS BEEN EXPLOITED WITHIN THE INTERIOR OF OUR COUNTRY BY BOTH ARABS AND INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENTS AND IT IS PART AND PARCEL OF THE ELEMENTS AT THE ORIGIN OF OUR PROBLEMS'"

9. " FINALLY, THE MARONITE LEADER BELIEVES THAT THE UNITED NATIONS CANNOT FIND A SOLUTION TO THE LEBANESE PROBLEM. 'AT THE BEST THE UN COULD ELIMINATE FOREIGN FACTORS SSCH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AS THE ISRAELI CANCER AND THE ELEMENTS THAT CONTINUE TO SEEK ARAB UNITY. ONLY THE LEBANESE CAN SOLVE THEIR PROBLEMS.'"
GODLEY

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